

U.S. Strategy Towards North Korea: *A New Way of Thinking*

by

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**U.S. STRATEGY TOWARDS NORTH KOREA:
*A NEW WAY OF THINKING***

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In light of the fact that there have been no major conflicts with North Korea since the signing of armistice in 1953, one could argue that the U.S.'s strategy has been overall successful. However, what is success? Is the avoidance of war or containment the best we can hope to achieve, or should the U.S. focus on a greater end; peace and stability in Northeast Asia? North Korean ideologies vary greatly compared to American ideologies, which have proven to be a major hindrance in negotiating with Pyongyang for the past 60 years. National security interests as well as economic factors within the United States, China, South Korea, Russia and Japan have all played a role in the break-down of the Six Party Talks. Containment has worked in the past, but how much longer will it work on a nation desperately seeking recognition? This paper will analyze past and current strategies of U.S. administrations and make recommendations that may be necessary to have continued peace in Northeast Asia.

U.S. STRATEGY TOWARDS NORTH KOREA: *A NEW WAY OF THINKING*

In September 2010, Daniel Blumenthal argued in *Foreign Policy Magazine* that the North Korean policy pursued by the administration of Barack Obama had been “successful”¹. Although it was a bit dated, I felt compelled to read the article in order to find out how one could define the U.S. strategy with North Korea in 2010 a success. The article implied that China was beginning to feel pressure by Obama’s foreign policy, and continued on by stating, “The fact that China is practically begging the other Six Party participants to come back to the table means that China is feeling the pain of Obama's policy. The administration has conducted joint exercises with the Republic of Korea, enacted harsh sanctions on Pyongyang, and refused to negotiate with Pyongyang unless it stops its provocations. We are demonstrating to Beijing that if it does not control its North Korean ally, China should be ready for intense U.S. pressure on its periphery.”² Apparently China did not beg hard enough; eighteen months later we still see no change to Pyongyang’s erratic behavior or progress on denuclearization. This should not come of great surprise to anyone. Washington has been struggling to find an effective policy towards Pyongyang for decades. Although North Korea has been relatively *contained* since the signing of armistice in 1953; Pyongyang has demonstrated its increased willingness to defy the international community over the past few years. This paper will argue that the U.S. still has not developed an effective strategy and should consider abandoning the antiquated tactics of isolation and sanctioning North Korea into obedience. This approach has proven unsuccessful, and if pursued, will likely fail to achieve its objectives with the North Korean regime.

North Korea and its People

Developing an effective strategy comes first with understanding the country and its people. North Korea is challenged economically in four areas: economic reform, food shortages, infrastructure, and medicine. In 2002, Pyongyang began a series of economic reforms that ultimately resulted in cutting many government subsidies previously provided to the people and allowing for limited private businesses. Although beneficial for some, the masses suffered terribly from these reforms. For example, official prices and wages were increased to bring them closer to black market levels. Consequently, food, fuel, electricity and public transportation prices increased significantly, making it unaffordable to the average North Korean.³ Food shortages have created malnourishment throughout the population; some reports indicate that it is impacting the military, even with the regime's "military first" policy. The country's infrastructure continues to decline as the years pass. Railway, highway, and bridges are in dire need of repair, making shipment of goods and materials throughout the country extremely difficult. The medical system is near collapse and there are reports of increasing rates of tuberculosis.⁴ Medical equipment is outdated and in many areas nonexistent, and medicine is becoming increasingly hard to find. Given these conditions, one would think that North Korea could very well be on the verge of regime collapse. Food is in short supply, people are starving, malnutrition is commonplace, rail and highway systems are not functioning, medicine is not available, and prices are unaffordable. So what is it that holds this regime together?

North Koreans have only known three leaders in 64 years of existence as a separate state, all of them being from one family. To most North Koreans, these men

are “god-like” figures who have liberated North Korea and protected the people from western aggression. North Korea propaganda paints these men as some of the most respected men in the world, and the populace believes it. According to Scott Snyder of the United States Institute of Peace:

Perhaps the most unique, pervasive, and – or to the outside observer – incomprehensible aspect of North Korea’s socialization process is the all-encompassing role played by Kim Il-Sung, who arguably continues to be the ruling figure – the “Eternal President” – in North Korea even after his death. Kim Il Sungism may have more in common with religions than with other communist regimes. And, like many strong faiths, it feeds on a form of aggrieved nationalism.....Once said by Kim, it is said forever. Nobody is allowed to change anything...The durability of Kim’s cult of personality even after his death is so powerful that it cannot be discarded lightly....⁵

With this in mind, one must not underestimate the power of the *Juche* ideology on the North Korean society. Hard for westerners to fully comprehend, the *Juche* ideology is deeply embedded into the belief system of the North Koreans, almost cultish in nature. Made a nationalist ideology by Kim Il-Sung in the early twentieth century, it emphasizes national self-reliance, independence, and the worship of their supreme leader.⁶ *Juche* is taught very early in a child’s school years and reinforced throughout their lives. It is repeated through national news and engrained in the beliefs of all North Koreans. Given the power of this ideology, it is not surprising that the North Korean people, although hungry and oppressed, will remain loyal to their country and the regime.

Nuclear Development and the Hermit Kingdom

The DPRK has posed a security threat for the U.S. and its allies for almost 60 years following the signing of the armistice agreement in 1953. The problem became exacerbated when in October 2002 the US Assistant Secretary for Northeast Asia announced that while in a meeting with North Korean officials, they admitted to having a secret uranium-enrichment program aimed at producing nuclear warheads.⁷ Since that time, Pyongyang has made their ambitions for the development of deployable nuclear warheads quite public, and in 2006, tested their first nuclear warhead.⁸ Although this test fell short of its intended yield, it was successful enough for North Korea to progress in nuclear weapons development.⁹ In Pyongyang's most recent test in May 2009, they detonated what experts believe to be a 2-4 kiloton bomb, which quite possibly may have met expectations, and most likely advanced North Korea's ability to build bombs with a yield of up to 20 kilotons.¹⁰

The dilemma of Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions is compounded by a number of contributing factors. First, North Korea is often referred to as the "Hermit Kingdom," reflecting the fact that the North Korean regime and its people are one of the most isolated countries in the world. Pyongyang has few international allies and not many more trading partners.¹¹ Although North Korea trades with both China and Russia, there are few that would disagree that Pyongyang's political relations with both of its neighbors are strained. To the South is the ROK, separated by a 250 km strip of land, the "demilitarized zone" or DMZ. This border is the most heavily armed border in the world, with tensions high and an unmistakable feeling of the Cold War wall separating East and West Berlin.¹²

A second factor is North Korea's geographical location in Northeast Asia, which has been referred to as "a region crisscrossed with interstate hostilities".¹³ A history of tensions and disagreements has existed among all five countries in the region. China, Japan, Russia, North Korea, and South Korea all make claims to exploitable resources in the surrounding oceans in that area. Border disputes are commonplace, and ethnic hatred still looms from previous wars and occupations.¹⁴

So why does North Korea want nuclear weapons? A common answer is that it is their way of getting the attention of the U.S., as argued by William Boik in "Understanding the North Korean Problem". If Pyongyang can capitalize on a perceived U.S. fear of a potential nuclear threat on the U.S. or her allies, then it can force the U.S. back to negotiations in an aim to get sanctions lifted and aid flowing. A similar analysis was conveyed by a Chinese delegation from the Shanghai University:

According to the delegates, the admission (of its nuclear development program) is North Korea's way of opening the door for dialogue with the United States. From the North Korean perspective, to develop relations with the United States it is necessary first to get the attention of the United States. North Korea's admission has certainly assured that it has moved front-and-center on the foreign policy agenda in Washington. Moreover, North Korea has few cards to play in its relationship with the U.S. North Korea has chosen to play the nuclear card because it wants to reach an understanding – a compromise, in other words – with the United States.¹⁵

But what if Pyongyang's ambitions are much broader than simply trying to gain the attention of Washington? It is much more likely that Pyongyang wants to stand as equals with the other powers in the region — China, Russia, South Korea, and Japan.

In the view of the government in Pyongyang, a nuclear weapons capability is a way to achieving that end.

Previous U.S. Strategies - George H.W. Bush

US–North Korea relations have been strained for decades, and several administrations have struggled with the problems of dealing with Pyongyang. For the purposes of this paper, we will look back at U.S. strategies over the past twenty years and four presidential administrations. First, the administration of George H.W. Bush favored a carrot-and-stick approach in dealing with North Korea, which at the time appeared to be somewhat successful.¹⁶ The administration was most interested in stability in the region, with a nuclear free North Korea and improved relations between the North and the South, eventually leading to a reunified Korea (this resembles a “status quo” approach, which will be discussed later in the paper). During his administration, Bush had requested that Pyongyang submit to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards and inspections. He also wanted Pyongyang to participate in the non-aggression pact with South Korea and be more accessible to the international community. In return, Bush offered to relax some American sanctions, to remove nuclear weapons from South Korea, to cancel a major annual US-ROK training exercise, and to normalize relations by opening a dialogue with Pyongyang.¹⁷ This carrot-and-stick approach seemed to be working; North Korea appeared to have halted its nuclear development facilities and allowed IAEA inspectors into the country, seemingly committed to meeting its end of the bargain.

William Jefferson “Bill” Clinton

The commitment did not last long however. On February 10, 1993, shortly after William Jefferson “Bill” Clinton assumed the office of the U.S. presidency; IAEA inspectors requested access to sites that were not on North Korea’s official list, and Pyongyang refused the request. Shortly after, a United Nations Security Council resolution was adopted that called for North Korea to allow access to these sites. In response, North Korea announced it would withdraw from the Non-proliferation Treaty.¹⁸ Bill Clinton foresaw the potential for increased instability in the region, and quickly began negotiations with Pyongyang. These negotiations were centered on many of the same demands Pyongyang had made in earlier years, such as cancellation of US-ROK military exercises, guarantees against U.S. attacks on North Korea, and recognition of North Korea’s socialist system, to name three. Although the negotiations were often strained, in June 1993, North Korea suspended its decision to pull out of the NPT. Pyongyang also agreed to the full and impartial application of IAEA safeguards. For its part, the United States granted assurances against the use of force. Washington also promised not to interfere with North Korea’s internal affairs.¹⁹ The months following these events were filled with tension and distrust between Washington and Pyongyang, primarily because North Korea did not allow the IAEA inspection teams the freedom of movement that they sought. It was at this point that the Clinton administration changed tactics, and embraced an approach similar to that used by the Bush administration years before. As Christopher LaRoche noted, “In reaction to North Korea’s non-compliance and despite the possibility that the regime might have already developed two nuclear warheads, the Clinton administration decided to offer Pyongyang positive

incentives on a per-issue, trade-off basis”.²⁰ In 1994, the United States and North Korea signed the Geneva Agreed Framework. Under this agreement, Pyongyang committed to freezing its plutonium weapons program in exchange for aid. As with the Bush administration, the Clinton administration kept open lines of communications with North Korea, and offered positive incentives, security assurances, and removal or loosening of sanctions in return for phased compliance. Although seemingly consistent approaches, the primary purpose of using the carrot-and-stick for Clinton was quite different from the previous administration. George H.W. Bush’s long term goal was stability in the region, while Clinton’s long term goal was regime collapse, evidenced by Clinton’s willingness to use stronger negative incentives and more issues linked to non-compliance.

George W. Bush

On entering office in 2001, George W. Bush was convinced that the Clinton Administration had given too much to North Korea without receiving assurances that North Korea had or would reduce their nuclear weapons program²¹. In fact, Bush ordered a stoppage of all high-level government contact with North Korea pending a complete review of the Clinton administration’s policy. Upon completion of the review in June 2001, a new policy was developed: referred to as a “comprehensive approach”, this policy included “verifiable constraints on North Korean missile development, less-threatening conventional forces, and improved human rights conditions”²². There are others who have characterized it as an “ABC policy – Anything But Clinton”.²³

Although George W. Bush initially placed North Korea as a foreign policy priority, the terrorist attacks on the U.S. in September 2001 quickly made negotiations with Pyongyang take a back seat. Instead of attention being given to negotiating a peaceful solution with North Korea, Pyongyang was simply labeled a threat to stability, and in his State of the Union Address in January 2002, Bush named North Korea as a member of the "Axis of Evil", along with Iraq and Iran.²⁴ Later in 2002, Washington further labeled North Korea as a "rogue regime", and stated that the U.S. must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they strike first.²⁵ Both the inclusion of North Korea in the "Axis of Evil" and its identification as a "rogue regime" marked a recognizable turning point from the carrot-and-stick approach put in place by George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

George W. Bush's new policy was referred to as the "hawk engagement" by his advisor Victor Cha, who believed that American strategic interests on the Korean peninsula were much more important than the limited goal of "achieving peaceful coexistence". Cha believed in an engagement strategy, but not necessarily engagement with Pyongyang. Rather, his approach focused on engagement with other interested parties in the region, in hopes of building a coalition that would be capable of punishing North Korea for non-compliance and eventually takes the North Korean regime down.²⁶ A necessary precondition for the U.S. to take military action against North Korea was to form a regional consensus that all efforts to resolve the situation peacefully had been exhausted. Without this consensus, taking any form of coercive action against the North Korean regime would be unworkable.

China was not in favor of the new Bush policy, preferring to maintain the current regime, but *manage* Pyongyang's nuclear aims. For China, regime collapse meant potential refugee problems and economic instability. In 2007, possibly in an effort to appease China, the U.S. policy dramatically shifted. Reversing its previous policy of no direct negotiations with Pyongyang, the U.S. sent Christopher Hill to Pyongyang for one-on-one talks. Hill had served in the Seoul embassy in the 1980s, was ambassador to South Korea in 2004-2005, was the U.S. representative to the Six-Party Talks, and was Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. This reversal was tremendously different from Bush's previous policy that had been place since administration first took office, and for the next 18 months produced positive results for the United States. An agreement was reached shortly after Hill's visit in which North Korea agreed to shut down its nuclear reactor and allow IAEA monitors into the country in exchange for economic aid. In exchange, North Korea was removed from the list of terrorism-supporting countries.²⁷ As usual, progress and negotiations were short-lived; by the middle of 2008, relations had broken down once again.

Throughout his presidency, George W. Bush's policy was to isolate North Korea, to prevent the proliferation of technology or weaponry; to use the U.S. military presence as a deterrent in the region; and to enforce the U.N. sanctions for non-compliance²⁸. As Bush prepared to leave office, it appeared that for every step of progress made, there had been two steps back. The North Korean regime had proved yet again that it was extremely unpredictable and unreliable.

Barrack Obama

Upon entering office, Barack Obama was faced with both the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as well as trying to determine how to deal with North Korea nuclear problem. Initially, the Obama administration was more open to bilateral talks than the previous Bush administration. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stated that “smart power” required the United States to reach out to both allies and adversaries.²⁹ However, in the first four months of the Obama administration, the relationship was affected by three issues. In March 2009, the North Koreans imprisoned two Asian-American journalists who Pyongyang claimed “illegally intruded” into North Korea and were subsequently sentenced to 12 years in prison. In April, the North Koreans tested its Unha-2, a three-stage missile. In May, Pyongyang withdrew from the Six Party Talks. These North Korean initiatives quickly shifted the administration’s engagement strategy to an even less open one than that of the Bush administration in its second term.³⁰

Almost three years into his presidency, after extremely limited dialogue, tough sanctions, and militant actions initiated by North Korea, it appears that Obama may be shifting back to his inaugural policy of open dialogue and use of soft power. In October 2011, the administration announced it will resume dialogue with North Korea about its nuclear weapons program.³¹ This announcement may be a sign that the U.S. wants to revive the Six Party Talks with the intent of offering economic assistance to the North Koreans in exchange for de-nuclearization.

The Six Party Talks

It was during the administration of George W. Bush that the Six Party Talks began. As a result of Pyongyang's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003, the Six Party Talks were established in August 2003 through a "negotiated process involving China, the United States, North and South Korea, Japan, and Russia".³² These talks were aimed at disabling or "managing" the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. In 2009, marred by political stand-offs between members of the six parties, particularly the United States and North Korea, the talks ended in failure. North Korea pulled out and began to reactivate the Yongbyon nuclear facilities.³³ One could argue that the failure of the six party talks was a result of a lack of cooperation between the five countries (minus North Korea) involved in the talks. These five countries *officially* all have the same goal – to end North Korea's nuclear program – but advocate different approaches to that end.³⁴

In order for Washington to develop an effective strategy, it must be cognizant of the policies and strategies the other four parties have taken towards North Korea. South Korea (ROK) has long proclaimed that its ultimate goal is a denuclearized North, and a peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula. The ROK has displayed a willingness to ease tensions by initiatives such as the "Sunshine Policy," and the proposal of a Korean Economic Community, both aimed to create conditions of economic assistance and cooperation for reunification.^{35, 36} However, in 2008, shortly after President Lee Myung-bak took office, the ROK adapted a new policy of "getting tough" with Pyongyang. The thought was that the Kim regime was getting increasingly

vulnerable, and a hard line approach might force Pyongyang to alter its behavior or possibly spark a regime collapse.³⁷ Today, we are aware this approach fell well short of its goal; in fact one could argue that it increased Pyongyang's aggressiveness towards the South. As for the regime, it appears to be as strong as ever. Following the death of Kim Jung-il, there was a relatively smooth transition of power to his son, Kim Jung-un. It may be too early to determine if the Kim regime will continue in power; however there is no evidence at this point to think otherwise.

China and Russia support a strategy referred to as the "status quo" approach, that is, they like things just the way they are³⁸. For Russia and China, maintaining stability in the region is in the best interest of their domestic and foreign policies. Both countries fear massive refugee flows into their countries, causing economic and internal security issues.³⁹ Russia is concerned with its economic development, especially in the far east of the country. It has invested considerable time and money into international infrastructure projects involving the Korean peninsula, such as oil and gas pipelines, and railroads.⁴⁰ Unification of the Koreas means little to the Russians; what is important to them is stability on the peninsula. Of course, Russia would prefer that North Korea abandon their nuclear program, but not at the cost of regime collapse or war. China has similar economic concerns, as it is North Korea's largest trading partner, but China also has security concerns. Geographically, North Korea serves as a buffer between the Chinese border and U.S./ROK alliance. Although unpredictable what a unified Korea would look like, it is likely that it would be a unified Korea aligned with the U.S. Such a situation would be a significant security risk for the Chinese, which is why Beijing may publically say they are in favor of unification, but in actuality have no interest in it at all.

In contrast, Japan's strategy aims at "transforming" the DPRK, which simply put means to bring about change in the current regime by hard line sanctions aimed at pressuring the DPRK to end the nuclear program.⁴¹ Maintaining the current regime in North Korea would not be in the security interests of Japan due to their geographical proximity to North Korea and the demonstrated hostile nature of the regime. Japan's concern over its vulnerability was validated when North Korea tested its Taepodong ballistic missile over Japan in 1998.⁴² Continued pursuit of nuclear weapons would undoubtedly cause instability in the region, and quite possibly have negative effects on Japan's economic interests. Even with a negotiated settlement through the Six Party Talks, it is doubtful that Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda would trust Pyongyang to live up to any agreements, given the long history of mistrust between the two countries.

Developing a New Approach

Given what we now know of the different U.S. policies over the past 20 years, and what we believe we can expect from the other members of the Six Party Talks, what new approach could the U.S. possibly develop that would succeed in normalizing relations with Pyongyang? Develop a new way to thinking and abandon the antiquated policies of the past two decades. Accept the reality of the situation and develop achievable objectives based on those realities. For the past 20 years, Washington has put in place several policies, all varying in some degree, but all aimed at transformation or collapse of the regime and nuclear disablement through isolation and sanctions.

First, the United States needs to abandon reliance on the potential for regime collapse. The Kim dictators have been in power since 1948, and have outlasted all U.S. administrations since the DPRK's establishment. After the death of Kim Jung-Il in 2011, there were hopes that the regime would fall, given the fact that leadership was handed over to a 29-year old inexperienced leader. What we have learned is that to date, there has been no indication that this transfer of power was anything but a total success. Mistakenly, the U.S. does not understand the power of the *Juche* ideology. This ideology holds Kim Il-Sung and his descendents at the center of their world, *god-like* persons. At the core, *Juche* is about nationalism and self-reliance, but also teaches anti-foreign beliefs, encouraging the North Korean people to become xenophobic in nature. Perhaps even more importantly, the regime is brutal in its use of force. A wide network of informants within various internal security agencies often detects any attempts at opposition to the regime. People accused of minor offenses undergo 'reeducation'; those accused of more serious transgressions are either executed or imprisoned in work camps. Even more shocking, the regime enforces a 'three generations' policy, punishing not only the individual responsible for the transgressions but his or her whole family."⁴³ An effective strategy will be one aimed at negotiations with the current regime, the Kim Jung-Un is and will likely be the ruler for many years to come.

Second, acknowledge the fact that North Korea is developing nuclear weapon capability and will likely not stop. Instead of focusing on nuclear disarmament, the U.S. needs to focus on how to manage and contain North Korea's nuclear weapons. A nuclear-capable North Korea is by no means more dangerous than terrorist organization

that may purchase nuclear weapons from North Korea. Abandon the idea that North Korea is developing nuclear weapons simply as a bargaining chip to command attention from the United States. The conventional views on North Korea's nuclear ambitions are both as a tool for economic aid and a deterrent to U.S. aggression. However, it is likely Pyongyang's goals are much broader: North Korea wants to become a nuclear power. What could be better for the North Koreans than to be a member of a state that is capable of standing as an equal among the most powerful countries in Northeast Asia?⁴⁴ It is completely unrealistic to expect North Korea, which views the U.S. as an aggressor, to agree to nuclear disarmament knowing that the U.S. is fully capable of a nuclear attack on North Korea. If the U.S. continues to demand "complete, verifiable, and irreversible destruction of its nuclear weapons program" as a precondition for normalization of U.S.-North Korea relations, then progress will likely not be seen.⁴⁵

Third, the U.S. should understand that isolation and sanctions will not work against North Korea. After decades of "on again/off again" negotiations, and harsh economic sanctions, North Korea is as resilient as ever. I would further argue that economic sanctions and threats from the U.S. make Pyongyang even more defiant and determined to successfully become a nuclear power. Not only do these sanctions not work against the regime, but they also deepen the hatred of the North Korean people towards the Americans and Japanese. If policy makers believe that the millions of starving and oppressed North Koreans blame the regime for their situation, they are deeply mistaken. I am not suggesting that North Korea be rewarded for bad behavior, but perhaps if the U.S. shift their focus and develop more realistic goals and objectives, North Korea's bad behavior would be less prevalent.

Lastly, the U.S. must not go at it alone. North Korea is not a U.S. only problem. By agreeing to strictly bilateral talks with North Korea we are assuming the problem for the rest of the world, and yes, North Korea is a world problem. The most practical venue to engage North Korea is through the already established Six-Party Talks. However, before the other five members approach North Korea, there needs to be an adjustment to the objectives of all five parties. Thus far, the Six Party Talks have been relatively unsuccessful due to the differentiating views on how to achieve the stated goal of nuclear disarmament. Perhaps the goal should be more overarching than nuclear disarmament, for is not nuclear disarmament only a means by which to achieve the larger goal of peace and stability in Northeast Asia? North Korea has never been happy about participating in this “tribunal” where it has to face five “determined judges” all trying to get it to accept the “sentence of nuclear disarmament.”⁴⁶ If the five members could agree that the *real* goal is peace and stability, then their approach to achieve this could be something other than nuclear disarmament. North Korea’s nuclear weapons are there, so why not negotiate management of these weapons instead of focusing on trying to get them dismantled?

Implementing this new approach would require a substantial shift in how Washington has negotiated with Pyongyang in the past. Admittedly, changing tactics to a more open approach towards North Korea would be extremely difficult given the realities of Washington politics. Perhaps the biggest hurdle would be convincing the Democrats and Republicans to agree on a new approach, and forming a bilateral approach that would foster support to the current president. Convincing the American

public would also prove difficult given the anti-Korean diet fed to them for the past 20 years. A new way of thinking will not be easy, but it is necessary.

Conclusion

The North Korean problem is not an easy one, as evidenced over the past twenty years. However, if the U.S. is really interested in creating stability in the region, then it must take an entirely different approach towards North Korea. Denuclearization is quite likely not going to happen without use of military force. It is not in the interest of Pyongyang, given that the country that refuses to sign a peace treaty with Pyongyang has over 9000 nuclear weapons in its inventory. Policymakers must realize that their best approach is to negotiate with the current regime, not endlessly wait for regime change or collapse. The Kims have been in power for the past 60 years, and likely will remain in power for some time to come. The *Juche* ideology of the North Korean people is powerful, much more powerful than the average westerner can imagine, and will likely ensure that the Kim regime lives on. Open dialogue, multilateralism with regional players, and a shift to more attainable goals will be the key to successful negotiations with Pyongyang.

Endnotes

¹ Daniel Blumenthal, "Obama's Successful North Korea Policy," *Foreign Policy*, September 3, 2010, Available at: http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/09/03/obamas_successful_north_korea_policy

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